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THE

BRITISH CRITIC,

FOR

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL,
MAY, AND JUNE.

MDCCCVII.

Hocc'eſt advorſo nixantem trudere monte
Saxum: quod tamen a ſummo jam vortice rurſum
Volitur, et plani raptim petit æquora campi.

LUCRET.

VOLUME XXIX.

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PREFACE.

FROM the unceaſing, and ever augmenting calamities of Europe, happy are the hours that compel us to turn to the contemplation of Britiſh Literature. Even the worſt books are a temporary refuge from ſtill worſe news; and the moſt abſurd ſpeculations are welcome, while they turn aſide our attention from the moſt melancholy facts. Under theſe impreſſions, to which every new half year gives tenfold force, we ſit down to write our preſent preface: to cull the flowers of recent literature, and recommend afreſh what, in this volume, has obtained our approbation. Let us then turn away our eyes altogether from public events, and enjoy, for a ſhort time at leaſt, the recollection of good books, and the oblivion of bad things.

DIVINITY.

Several articles in the preſent, and ſome in our preceding volume, are devoted to the biblical labours of *Dr. Stock*, Biſhop of *Killala* *. In tranſlating *Iſaiah* his object was to make ſuch corrections of the Verſion of Lowth, as the original Hebrew, printed

* No. II. p. 134. IV and V. pp. 368 and 496.

with it, ſeemed to demand. In the book of *Job* he has taken more liberty: and, in both, availing himſelf of all varieties of reading which are calculated to throw real light upon the text, has produced ſuch works as cannot but be uſeful and inſtructive to the theological ſtudent. To *the Dean of Lichfield's* new tranſlation of the *Apocalypſe* * we can, with the utmoſt ſecurity, refer the ſame claſs of readers; who will find in it ſound learning and ſagacious inveſtigation, perfectly free from all fanciful theories, and uncertain ſurmiſes.

We ſee, with ſome ſurpriſe, that theſe are all the conſiderable works in divinity which we have lately noticed: but ſeveral of leſs extent and labour have ſtill abundant merit. Thus the *Hiſtorical View of Chriſtianity*, illuſtrated by the comments of Gibbon, and other writers of hoſtile intention, exhibits a moſt ingenious and powerful method of turning the weapons of unbelievers againſt themſelves. We attributed it, and we believe rightly, to *Mr. Bernard* †. Another anonymous work, aſcribed, with no leſs reaſon, to a man of eminent worth ‡, takes an important view of Chriſtian duty, in its relation to commercial employment. It is called, therefore, *Conſiderations on the Alliance between Chriſtianity and Commerce* §, and contains many ſuggeſtions of the utmoſt value, to a country ſituated like our own.

The two volumes of Diſcourſes, produced by the *Rev. E. Brackenbury* ‖, compriſe a connected ſyſtem of Chriſtianity, according to the doctrines of our eſtabliſhed Church: of which it is but juſt to ſay, that the plan is good, and the execution ſenſible. *Mr. Hett's Diſcourſes* ¶, on the great topics of Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, are alſo ſound and uſeful; and are accompanied by a judicious recom-

* No. II. p. 191.
† No. I. p. 28.
‡ *Mr. Raikes, of Glouceſter.*
§ No. III. p. 289.
‖ No. I. p. 48.
¶ No. V. p. 567.

mendation of other instructive books. *Dr. Purdy* may be said to have revived one of our most edifying manuals, by republishing *Addison's Evidences of the Christian Religion* *, with the notes of a profound and pious commentator. Thus illustrated, we trust that the work of our excellent countryman will obtain a new and more extensive circulation. As a work of mere labour, into which the author had no opportunity to introduce his own peculiar opinions, we can recommend even *Priestley's Index to the Bible* †, though not without allowing a full share of the praise to his diligent predecessor, Pilkington. To speak of a still smaller work, *Mr. Buckle's Catechism* ‡ on the Articles and Liturgy, is a performance of great merit; illustrating the consistency of our Church by the comparison of its own words. The very daring introduction of Socinianism into the pulpit at a clerical meeting, called forth two useful tracts in reply; the one, entitled *Strictures* § is anonymous ‖; the other, in the form of a letter to the offender, is the work of *Mr. Ed. Nares*, of Biddenden, in Kent ¶. Both are argumentative and clear confutations of positions equally daring and false.

Sermons and Charges, separately published, always form a conspicuous part of this recapitulation: nor are we now deficient in that respect. We have to notice a perspicuous and able Charge from the *Bishop of Durham* **, directed principally against the errors of the Church of Rome. From the Episcopal Church of Scotland we have also a Charge, which chiefly treats, as might be expected, on the peculiar circumstances of that Church. *Bp. Sandford* †† very justly compares them to those of the primitive Church

* No. IV. p. 416. † No. III. p. 328. ‡ No. III. p. 327.
§ No. III. p. 325.

‖ But ascribed to a learned and exemplary divine in the diocese of London.

¶ No. III. p. 326. ** No. III. p. 257. †† No. IV. p. 393.

before its legal eſtabliſhment; and argues ſtrongly to promote union among all the Epiſcopalians there ſettled. The *Archdeacon of Rocheſter* * alſo publiſhed a Charge, in which many momentous topics were handled with ability and judgment.

In the Sermon of the *Biſhop of St. David's*, on the anniverſary of the 30th of January †, the nature of our national ſin, on that occaſion, is explained with peculiar perſpicuity; and its operation as an example, even at ſo diſtant a period as in the late troubles of France, is marked with uncommon ſtrength and propriety. *Dr. Malthy's Commencement Sermon* ‡ we read with great ſatisfaction, and ſhould doubtleſs have heard with ſtill more; being a ſtrictly appropriate exhortation to the young men of Cambridge, to improve the opportunities which they there enjoy. *The Liturgy* of our excellent Church is well illuſtrated, as being "a form of ſound words," in a Sermon lately publiſhed by *Dr. Gaſkin* §; whoſe judicious commendation does honour to himſelf, by doing juſtice to ſo important a ſubject.

HISTORY.

Of original hiſtory we have lately ſeen nothing; or nothing that we could approve, which equally deprives the preſent claſs of its materials. The tranſlation of *the Works of Salluſt*, by *Dr. Steuart*, which we began to examine in our preceding volume ‖, was here concluded ¶, and we had the pleaſure of giving to the work almoſt unqualified praiſe. Though the hiſtorical topics treated by Salluſt are only few, the ſcope taken in the life and notes to this tranſlation is by no means confined. *Captain Burney's Hiſtory of*

* Dr. J. Law. No. I. p. 86. † No. IV. p. 448.
‡ No. I. p. 88. § No. VI. p. 689. ‖ Vol. XXVIII. p. 584.
¶ No. III. p. 245.

Voyages

Voyages and Diſcoveries in the South Sea *, may ſeem perhaps to claſs but indifferently with civil and political hiſtories; but we were equally unwilling to confound it with recent voyages, and therefore have here noticed it. As a hiſtory, confined to particular objects, it certainly is well digeſted, well written, and drawn from the moſt authentic materials. The ſecond volume was the ſubject of our late examination, a third is intended to complete this part of the author's plan.

Recent hiſtory, or materials at leaſt for it, may be found very amply collected in *Rivingtons' Annual Regiſters*, now proceeding in a double ſeries, from 1793 and 1801, to make amends for a long ceſſation. It appears to us that theſe new volumes are really executed with the care and ſpirit of the original work; the extraordinary ſuſpenſion of which has called forth ſeveral other attempts to gratify the curioſity of the public. It ſhould certainly have been remembered that a work is ill denominated an "*Annual* Regiſter," which appears but once in ſeven years; though the contents of each volume may be confined to the period of a year.

Biography.

Biography is to hiſtory, what the view of a particular ſpot is to the general chart of a diſtrict: it conveys leſs knowledge, but of a more attractive kind. We ſee more in detail and leſs in extent. The life of *Michael Angelo*, which *Mr. Duppa* undertook to delineate †, was one of the richeſt objects in nature. It afforded a view of human genius in the higheſt ſtate of elevation; and to trace its progreſs from the promiſes of infancy to the full maturity of

* No. II. p. 152. † No. V. p. 480.

its powers, muſt have been a moſt delightful taſk. Mr. Duppa has by no means ſucceeded ill in pourtraying this phænomenon to us, and many readers will, we doubt not, be found who will proceed joyfully with him through the whole extent of his progreſs. *Mr. Wooll* did not entirely ſatisfy us in his delineation of the mild and elegant genius of *Dr. J. Warton* *. Yet the life of ſuch a man cannot be deficient in intereſt; and we have cited from it many paſſages abundantly proving that it well deſerves peruſal. The life of *Dr. Clarke*, produced by Dr. Fenwick, is profeſſedly only a ſketch †; it may, however, have its uſe, and particularly to thoſe who are engaged in ſimilar purſuits.

Mr. Tomline's Speech on the Character of *Mr. Pitt* ‡, is not ſtrictly biography; yet it compriſes of neceſſity ſo much of a biographical kind, and ſo much that is admirably drawn, of the character and actions of that great Stateſman, that we thought it indiſpenſable to mention it in this place. Whenever a biographer ſhall be found qualified to go through the whole hiſtory and merits of Mr. Pitt, there will be ſome fine features of character which even he muſt borrow from this Speech, or from the ſame ſources of information.

Politics.

From Mr. Pitt to politics the tranſition is eaſy, though the two ſucceſſive claſſes are not otherwiſe connected. Alas, that ſuch a man ſhould have become a topic for the biographer, while the aſpects of the political world continue ſo extremely threatening! If the "political Picture of Europe" was dark when it was viewed ſome months ago by an able foreigner, whom we lately noticed §, what muſt it be now,

* No. VI. p. 581. † No. II. p. 209. ‡ No. II. p. 163.
§ No. IV. p. 436.

when

when its laſt defences are impaired, if not broken; and new triumphs have added ſtrength to him whoſe power was before ſo formidable! Under ſuch circumſtances it will behove us to look, with the whole force of our attention, into the real *Dangers of our country*, in caſe the laſt great conteſt ſhould take place. They are ably ſtated by *Mr. Stephen* *, whoſe patriotic views of the ſubject in many reſpects deſerve conſideration.

On the late political diſputes in our own country, we have earneſtly wiſhed to avoid all violence and acrimony. At the ſame time, there is one perſon, above all competition in point of rank, whoſe firm and conſiſtent opinions on that great topic we have always felt it our undoubted duty to ſupport. We ſupport them from conviction, and therefore have recommended to our readers chiefly the tracts on that ſide. But, excluſive of all controverſial writings, the *Speech of Lord Sidmouth* † ought to be conſulted, as an authentic document, on points of the firſt importance. The reſt we ſhall not recapitulate.

A material part of political œconomy is the relief and regulation of the poor, which a bill lately propoſed has brought afreſh into diſcuſſion. On the ſubject of this deſign we have paid attention to the remarks of different magiſtrates, apparently men of experience, the one anonymous ‡, the other of the name of *Weyland* §. Both are rather adverſe to the principal regulations of the propoſed bill. But whatever may be thought of legiſlative attempts to ameliorate the ſituation of the poor, no benevolent perſon can fail to admire the efforts of the *Society* which is formed for that purpoſe. The completion of the fourth ‖ and of the fifth volume ¶ of their reports gave us occaſion lately to ſpeak as we ought of the zeal and intelligence of their proceedings.

* No. IV. p. 409. † No. VI. p. 687. ‡ No. IV. p. 432.
§ No. V. p. 562-3. ‖ No. II. p. 205. ¶ No. III. p. 309.

PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy and Natural History.

Whether to make comprehenſive claſſes, or minute ſubdiviſions, has ſometimes been a doubt, in the arrangement of our prefaces. At preſent we are led to the former, by the convenience of uniting many articles in ſome reſpects differing from each other. Thus, *Mr. Knight's Inquiry into the Principles of Taſte* *, in which we found much to praiſe, is ſtrictly a philoſophical inveſtigation; yet has it very few points of connection with *Mr. Tooke's Diverſions of Purley* †, which is, or rather ought to be, confined to the philoſophy of grammar, and the facts of etymology. The introduction of political opinions in it is perfectly heterogeneous. From theſe topics again we take a very wide compaſs, when we ſpeak of the *Elements of Mechanical Philoſophy*, the excellent work of the late *Profeſſor Robiſon* ‡. This acute and ſound philoſopher, whoſe loſs we cannot too deeply regret, like Newton, was the firm opponent of atheiſm; and diſtinctly traced the operations of divine intelligence in all the phænomena of the natural world. A part of this great ſubject has alſo been ably handled by *Profeſſor Vince*, who, in his *Obſervations on the Cauſe of Gravitation* §, has ſhown, upon mathematical principles, that the mechanical cauſes attempted to be aſſigned are inadequate to the effects; which can be referred only to the direct appointment of the Creator. *Mr. Williams's* book on *the Climate of Great Britain* ‖ we can only mention as a work of great, but perverted ingenuity, to which the preſent ſeaſon ſeems of itſelf to offer a ſufficient confutation.

With Botany, Gardening, and Natural Hiſtory in general we muſt conclude this very comprehenſive

* No. I. p. 1. II. p. 168. † No. V. p. 461. VI. 631.
‡ No. III. p. 221. IV. p. 508. § No. I. p. 44.
‖ No. VI. p. 618.

ſection.

ſection. To the firſt of theſe topics we are called by the ſingle work of Meſſrs. *Turner and Dillwyn, the Botaniſt's Guide* *; *Mr. M'Donald's Dictionary of Gardening* † brings us to the ſecond; and *Mr. Bigland's Letters on Natural Hiſtory* to the third. Though not works of primary importance, they are all calculated to be uſeful in their reſpective departments; and ought not by any means to be paſſed in ſilence.

MEDICINE.

The gout continues to be the reproach of medicine. A few letters on the ſubject, by the late *Dr. Hamilton* ‡, of Lynn Regis, ſerve to ſhow that a fanciful theory may happen to give riſe to a judicious and uſeful practice. On the important ſubject of *Vaccination*, every day becoming more important, by more ample confirmation of its efficacy §, *Dr. Willan* has produced a very inſtructive and ſatisfactory book ‖, in which arguments and facts are well collected, miſrepreſentations oppoſed, and practical inſtructions conveyed. On the medical arrangements neceſſary for armies, a work has been produced by *Dr. R. Jackſon* ¶, which appears to be the reſult of much experience, accompanied and followed by much reflection. The ſubject does not appear to have been before ſo ſyſtematically conſidered. On an anonymous book entitled the *Manual of Health* **, what ſhall we ſay? At once eccentric and intelligent, it reminds us of the character of ſome eminent phyſicians, whoſe oddities have been no leſs conſpicuous than their profeſſional merit.

* No. I. p. 77. † No. IV. p. 388. ‡ No I. p. 85.

§ See particularly "the Report of the Royal College of Phyſicians of London," printed by order of the Houſe of Commons, July 8, 1807.

‖ No. III. p. 259. ¶ No. VI. p. 692. ** No. II. p. 147.

Of

Of books more properly ſurgical, we have only two to notice; the firſt of which is the concluſion of an elaborate work on the *Diſeaſes of the Teeth*, by Mr. *Fox**; of which the former volume was noticed long ago. The other is a book of practical importance, on the *Exciſion of carious joints* †, the reſult of the ſagacity and experience of one French, and two Britiſh, ſurgeons.

TRAVELS.

We have generally had a large aſſortment of travels; at preſent the republication of *Bruce's* ‡ Work is the principal article on our liſt. The confirmation of ſeveral points which were thought doubtful will be found in this edition; but Bruce will ever be liable to ſome contradictions; and, if we miſtake not, there are ſome as yet to come forward which will be found more formidable than all the reſt. *Mr. Thornton's Sporting Tour in France* §, and *Mr. Malcolm's Excurſions* ‖ at home, are books which will produce no controverſy: but they will amuſe thoſe claſſes of readers for whom they were intended, and with that their ambition muſt be ſatisfied. The *Beauties of England* and *Wales*, by Meſſrs. *Brayley and Britton* ¶, are now becoming voluminous. If they are not ſtrictly *travels*, they may well ſupply the place of many Engliſh tours, which are uſually drawn up with much leſs knowledge, and accompanied by very inferior illuſtrations.

* No. IV. p. 357. † No. IV. p. 445. ‡ No. VI. p. 650.
§ No. III. p. 341. ‖ No. IV. p. 422. ¶ No. II. p. 212.

POETRY.

We are in arrear to the Britiſh Muſes of two or three conſiderable works, which accident has obliged us to defer. In the mean time we have only gleanings to bring forward, and thoſe not very conſiderable. The works of *Mickle* *, though publiſhed in a very humble form, muſt be acceptable to the lovers of poetry. Whether we ſhall have ſtimulated the editor to give more ſplendour of appearance to his friend, remains as yet uncertain. The merit of *Mr. Rhodes's* † poems, ought certainly to preſerve them from oblivion; and ſeveral ſmaller effuſions, which we do not here recapitulate, will be ſought occaſionally from the mention we have already made of them.

If we turn to tranſlations, and new editions of eſtabliſhed works, we have more important objects of attention. *Mr. Good's tranſlation of Lucretius* ‡ is a claſſical and able work; warm with the fire and ſpirit of the original, and accompanied by copious illuſtrations. *Mr. Cary* has completed the third part of Dante's great Poem §, and has preſerved the character he obtained, of a faithful and ſpirited interpreter. We preſume, therefore, that this verſion of the *Inferno*, will be followed, in due time, by the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiſo*.

Among editions, we have had to notice no leſs than two of Shakſpeare; that republication of Steevens's edition which the late *Mr. Iſaac Reed* ſuperintended ‖, and an edition of more general uſe conducted by *Mr. A. Chalmers* ‖.

The poetical works of *Sir David Lindſay*, an early poet of Scotland, have been brought forward, with abundant and learned illuſtrations, by *Mr. G. Chal-*

* No. VI. p. 607. † No. I. p. 77. ‡ No. IV. p. 376.
§ No. V. p. 528. ‖ No. I. p. 31.

mers;

mers *; and the ſhelf of the curious collector is thus enriched by a very welcome acceſſion. *Mr. Gladwin's* firſt volume of the *Perſian Claſſics* † is the commencement of an important work, which deſerves to ſtand among poetry, though the Engliſh Verſion be not metrical.

Mr. Jamieſon's Popular Ballads ‡, and *Mr. Cottle's* Selection of Poems §, reſt chiefly on the works of other poets: yet has each collector occaſionally introduced his own effuſions; and ſometimes with a very happy effect. The *Canzoni* of *Mr. Mathias* ‖, though not Engliſh compoſitions, are ſtrong proofs of Engliſh genius; and place his name, where he can have but few competitors, in the claſs of Anglo-Tuſcan Poets. They remind us of the portrait of Reynolds, received into the gallery at Florence.

MISCELLANIES.

Variety at leaſt muſt recommend this concluding ſection of our preface, which is a claſs and no claſs, or the compulſory union of ſubjects which have no natural tendency to unite. Bibliography, Muſic, Education, in a word, whatever does not belong to any of the former ſections, and has not companions ſufficient to conſtitute a new one.

Let us begin with *Mr. Beloe's Anecdotes of Literature* ¶; a book of ſuch various information on ſubjects ſo congenial to the purſuits of ſcholars, that it cannot ever be overlooked, till ſuch inquiries ſhall fall into neglect. Of the *Bibliographical Dictionary*, of which *Mr. Adam Clarke* is the editor **, we have hitherto ſaid little; but, eſteeming it for the reaſons above aſſigned, we ſhall ſoon take an opportunity to

* No. I. p. 21. † No. III. p. 285.
‡ No. II. p. 123. III. 294. § No. IV. p. 426.
‖ No. III. p. 315. ¶ No. III. p. 303. ** No. V. p. 540.

continue

continue our friendly notes upon it. The *Muſical Grammar*, lately publiſhed by Dr. *Callcott* *, is a ſpecimen of elementary inſtruction, not before attempted in our language. On the ſubject of Education in general, *Miſs Hamilton*, who had before publiſhed with ſucceſs, has lately added two volumes of *Letters* †, in which her former reputation is not impaired. On the neceſſary cultivation for *the Arts in England*, *Mr. P. Hoare* ‡ has written with ſagacity and taſte. Subſervient, in great meaſure, to the ſame deſign is the periodical paper called *the Director* §, into which, however, a great variety of information and amuſement has been introduced. To Antiquaries, who delight in a difficult inveſtigation, we can recommend, as curious at leaſt, *Mr. Gabb's* diſquiſitions on the great *Pyramid* ‖. They who do not adopt his theory will yet be pleaſed with his ingenuity and knowledge. The *Opuſcula Ruhnkeniana*, edited by *Mr. Kidd* ¶, beſides opening the acceſs to many valuable tracts, contain ſo much of very laborious and uſeful collection in the prolegomena, as muſt make the work almoſt invaluable to a critical ſcholar.

As works of plain and ſober utility, let us conclude by recommending the *Eſſay on the Population of Dublin*, by Mr. *Whitelaw* **; and the elaborate *Nautical Tables*, compiled and publiſhed by *Mr. Mendoza Rios* ††, under the patronage of the Board of Longitude, and other protectors of true ſcience.

Here then let us pauſe; and would to heaven we could ſay with a modern, but ſometimes not ineloquent, poet:

> Dum licet in portum tendamus; *nubila clarum*
> *Reddiderint ubi pulſa diem*, revocabit ab alto
> Nos Triton ſcopulo, atque iterum tentabimus æquor.

* No. III. p. 389. † No. IV. p. 347. ‡ No. IV. p. 362.
§ No. V. p. 549. ‖ No. VI. p. 610. ¶ No. VI. p. 662.
** No. IV. p. 434. †† No. III. p. 323.

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